

**Thomas Jefferson to Nicholas Lewis, February 9, 1791,
with Copy, from the Works of Thomas Jefferson in
Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited
by Paul Leicester Ford.**

TO NICHOLAS LEWIS J. MSS.

Philadelphia Feb. 9. 1791.

Dear Sir, &I have been so closely engaged ever since the meeting of Congress as never to have had a moment to write to you.

I think it might be well to advertize my lands at Elkhill for sale, and therefore inclose you the form of an advertisement, in which you will observe I have omitted the name of the proprietor, which as long as I am in public I would wish to keep out of view in every thing of a private nature. If you think any thing in the advertisement had better be omitted, or any thing else inserted, be so good as to make it what you think it should be.¹

¹ "For Sale. The lands called Elk-hill on James river & the Byrd estate, adjacent to Elk-island in Goochland, containing 669 acres & consisting of two parcels, the one of 307 acres of low ground & highlands both of the first quality, the other of 362 acres of good grain land, mostly well timbered. The two parcels are 250 yards apart, a public road passing through that interval & are cultivated as one plantation. On the former and in a very handsome position is a commodious dwelling house, built by the late Reuben Skelton for his own residence, having 4 rooms below & 2 above, with good out houses erected since his time. The price is 40/sterling the acre, payable by instalments in the years 1793.4.5.6. with interest from the delivery of the lands. Real security will be required. Capt.

Library of Congress

Henry Mullins, who lives adjoining to these lands will shew them to any person wishing to purchase, & the subscriber in Albemarle has full authority to conclude the sale.”

Understanding that tobo. is still low in Virginia, and the price here, for such as mine being from 26/ to 30/ Virginia money I have concluded to try an experiment of bringing part of it here, & if it suits the market the rest may come also. Not being able to wait till the order could go through you, I have written to Mr. Hylton to send me immediately 20. hhds of it, as they are now in want here, & the river now opening they will soon have their supply. I am in hopes it may come in time to order on the residue, if the experiment succeeds. However I would not have the shipment of the rest to Mr. Maury delayed on that account, as perhaps I may find the bringing it here not to answer. The proceeds of these 20. hhds shall be immediately remitted to Mr. Lyle or Hanson. Wheat is here at a French crown: tho' in truth there is little brought to market. I have no doubt it will fall as soon

as the farmers come in.

Congress will rise on the 3d of March. They have passed an excise bill, which, considering the present circumstances of the Union, is not without objection, and a bill for establishing a bank to which it is objected that they have transcended their powers. There are certainly persons in all the departments who are for driving too fast. Government being founded on opinion, the opinion of the public, even when it is wrong, ought to be respected to a certain degree. The prudence of the President is an anchor of safety to us. I received Mrs. Lewis's letter of Jan. 23. and return her many thanks for it, as well as for her kind attention to my daughter, who expresses great sensibility for her goodness.

P.S. I must pray you to get the contract with Ronald completely executed, & particularly as to the mortgage of his Beverdam lands. I observe part of my Cumberland lands advertised for the taxes of 1789, which I mention lest the advertisement should have escaped you.